

(323) 881-2401

February 26, 2003

TO: EACH SUPERVISOR

FROM: P. MICHAEL FREEMAN

**PUBLIC ASSEMBLY OCCUPANCIES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

The recent tragedy that occurred in Rhode Island has prompted a heightened awareness by all fire departments to reexamine prevention procedures for public assembly occupancies and to ensure their compliance with the Fire Code.

Within the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's jurisdiction, there are approximately 490 assembly occupancies on record of which 68 are occupancies of less than 300 people. A majority of the nightclub type assembly occupancies are located in the West Hollywood/Marina Del Rey area.

Public assemblies are inspected twice a year by the Fire Department and are required to have a permit on file. The County of Los Angeles Fire Department continues to maintain a night inspection program in which public assemblies are inspected during operation and at random. The following items are regularly inspected:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Assembly Permit | <input type="checkbox"/> Combustible Materials    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupancy Signs        | <input type="checkbox"/> Aisles                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exit/Doors             | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency lighting/Signs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panic Hardware         | <input type="checkbox"/> Extinguishers            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overcrowding           | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Protection Systems  |

Special events that require open flames or theatrical pyrotechnics require that the occupant apply for a special permit. The occupant is required to provide a plot plan of the facility, time and date of the event, list the type of theatrical pyrotechnics requesting to be used, name of company performing the display, and a copy of the State of California Pyrotechnics License.

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If approved, the assigned inspector will conduct a site inspection prior to the event checking the location, type of theatrical pyrotechnics being used, the State of California license of the operator, occupant load, and emergency exits. The inspector will remain at the site until the event is completed and has the authority to stop the performance at anytime if he/she feels that it is unsafe or that the public's safety is at risk.

This past weekend, Fire Prevention inspectors in coordination with fire station personnel, conducted random inspections to over 25 assembly occupancies, to identify full code compliance with the Fire Code and to assure the safety of the public. During our inspections, we found only minor violations all of which were addressed and corrected.

We will continue our efforts to help ensure the safety of the public who visit these facilities. If you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Assistant Fire Chief Johnny Jee, Fire Marshal, Fire Prevention Division, at (323) 890-4144.

PMF:kj

c: David E. Janssen  
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